Eliminating Health Disparities – Who is Accountable?

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What’s the Urgency?

“For most of the areas studied, disparities between white patients and black patients have not substantially improved during the past decade...we will not make progress in eliminating disparities simply by tinkering with the system.”

Nicole Lurie, MD
The New England Journal of Medicine
August 18, 2005
Three-Pronged Accountability Plan

1. Government (local, state, federal)

2. Health care industry

3. Individuals
Health Care Industry: Examples of Solutions

- National Health Plan Collaborative
  Public/private partnership

- Harvard Pilgrim Health Care
  Institute for Linguistic and Cultural Skills

- Kaiser Permanente, Aetna, WellPoint
  Collecting racial/ethnic and language preference data

- Kaiser Permanente
  Culturally competent care provider training programs
  Culturally Competent Care Centers of Excellence
  Farmers’ markets; 22 in five states
Five-Point Plan for Individuals

1. Know your numbers
2. Know your history
3. Eat colors
4. Be active
5. Establish a relationship with a health care provider
Recommendations

1. Collect racial/ethnic data using a standard set of measurements

2. Create incentives for health care providers to provide culturally competent care

3. Create incentives for medical schools to train physicians in culturally competent care